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First to Last—the Truth: News—Editorials —Advertisements

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Again a Congress

When Congress assembles in extra session it will be after what may properly be deemed a Congressional interregnum. At the outbreak of the war an adjournment of politics was proclaimed amid general rejoicings, and there was great regret when Burleson and others refused to abide the understanding.

But though politics did not stay adjourned, Congress, although there was no formal proroguing, was in effect adjourned. By this is meant that Congress temporarily ceased being an independent, coördinate branch of the government. As to the pressing business before the country it became a consultative body; it approved and gave consent, but it initiated little. It enregistered decrees rather than passed laws.

This fact is mentioned here not in the way of criticism. Congress gladly minimized its prerogatives, and the public approved its partial abdication. It was necessary to centre power, and the Executive office was the only possible centre. Congress is not organized to make the quick decisions which are required in a crisis. It is too large and many-voiced. It has no administrative machinery.

The American people showed a sound instinct when they turned to the President to boss the job and were impatient of gratuitous or partisan faultfinding. "Don't bother the pilot" was a maximum whose pertinency Congress, as well as the country, recognized. The President was in office for a definite time, and it was impossible to work speedily and effectively through any other agency. Some other man might have done better, but it was idle to speculate over this, for the existing President was the only one the country had or could get. This was the common sense view of the multitude.

Now Congress meets under different conditions. Peace is in sight, the crisis which justified an extraordinary integration of power is over and the government is to go back to normal. It is wise for Congress to resume its functions.

In some quarters is observable a tendency to carry was phychology over into the post-war period, and to regard the reappearance of Congress as an intrusion. The common sense of the country can be relied on to hold these in check, just as for two years it held in check those who could not see why things could not go on in war time as in peace time.

Congress has a big job before it—a job it only can do, as only the President could do the job of the last two years. It should be assisted and loyally coöperated with by the Executive department and be supported by public opinion in the exercise of its constitutional prerogatives. It is to be hoped that no marplots on either side will be able to work up and perpetuate disharmony.

To get harmony and to avoid discord there is no other way than through open-minded, mutual counsel. The present Congress and the present President are married for two years, and they must get along if the Republic is not to suffer harm.

From both the White House and from the Capitol should go up prayers for breadth of vision, for escape from narrowness, for intelligent light from every quarter. Partisanship of the old kind is not strong, but there is obvious danger that personal politics of a meaner type will take its place and that the session will see one end of Pennsylvania Avenue engaged in the ignoble business of digging pits for the other.

Hindenburg's Testimony

The letter of Hindenburg showing that on September 29, 1918, forty-three days before the signing of the armistice, he requested Prince Max of Baden to make an immediate peace offer sets at rest all controversy as to how the war was brought to a close.

Not propaganda, not a revolutionary uprising in Germany, brought the war to an end, but military defeat. With great explicitness Hindenburg gave the reasons for his request. The Macedonian front had collapsed, and there were no more reserves to sustain the Western line. No hint is given of trouble at home or mention made of any break in army morale. The German generalissimo, it may be assumed, would not have neglected bringing forward excuses if there had been basis for them. The toll of casualties during the last weeks shows that the German armies were hopelessly defeated, as their leaders saw and declared in confidential documents.

Those interested in some pet idea have sought to establish that the war was won by the circulation of their favorite pamphlets. Propaganda, the scattering of leaflets promising good treatment to prisoners and advertising the uselessness of further struggle—these methods, which are as old as war itself, had some influence, but the conditions that made them influential were created by the fighting men.

Effort continues in various quarters to diminish the glory of the Allied armies by representing that the German army had become so weak of heart by perusing printed words and was so abandoned by the home folks as to offer but a nominal resistance. This is not only a perversion of the facts but verges on insult to our soldiers. It was doers, not talkers, who won. The orator, the journalist, the pamphleteer, has his use, but in time of crisis it is secondary. Those whose business it is to string together words should never forget this and never seek to filch credit elsewhere belonging.

Eastward Ho!

It was adventure that found America hidden in the western seas and it was adventure that planted men upon her distant shores. Fitting it is that adventure, winging eastward now, bears the first message of the skies from the New World to the Old. As we think breathlessly of those giant 'planes, specks in the great air, flecks of foam upon a waste of waters, there comes to mind that other spectacle, four centuries ago, of three tiny storm-wracked caravels driving westward through the force of one man's will—until as now:

Behind him lay the gray Azores.

It is a magnificent and daring success that our navy crews have achieved. The longest leg of their transatlantic voyage is completed and completed gloriously. We dare believe confidently now that victory is theirs. Imagination took flight with them. The hopes and prayers of the country went before them. For all the efficient patrol planned on the sea lane there is no escaping the risk, the possibility of disaster. No one knows that element better than Commander Towers and his fellow fliers. Their chance of making an epoch is on the knees of the gods. Their courage and skill are the pride of their countrymen.

Typically American, we are proud to think, has been the bold attempt from the start. The handicap of backward development in this country was a huge one. Yet the plan went forward swiftly, steadily, soundly. If success came it was to be not a mere fool's chance, a combination of luck and weather, but the issue of patient planning, of thorough engineering preparation. The whole wide-flung scheme by which weather reports are being obtained and the flight lanes patrolled is a tribute to the devotion and skill with which the project has been conceived and executed. On top of this foundation stands the human daring of our fliers, taking the air while a row of earlier rivals waits.

The highest praise goes to the Navy Department for its enterprise and skill. As always, Americans, seeing only their national blunders and failures, were unaware how rapidly progress had been made and a lost leadership rewon. Lamenting our national lack of foresight in one moment we soar confidently out to sea the next on a venture born of intense preparation and executed with that keen fearlessness which only a land of pioneers, born of pioneering and refreshed by its adventure in every generation, can possibly achieve.

Let us add a word of the plucky NC-4 that made her first two legs in the face of much trouble. The facility with which her crews made landings and repairs was strong evidence of the soundness of the venture. And now she evens her luck by making the Azores first of the fleet. The stern chase won.

After all and spite of everything the American eagle is a bird and he will fly. An ungrateful republic may forget him, civilian heads of departments may seek to clip his wings. But give him the least chance and—look at him!

Altogether, no wonder the American eagle screams.

Alien Slackers

An effort will be made soon after Congress meets to penalize the alien slacker. This class includes neutral residents, found eligible for military service, who secured exemption on the ground that they were citizens or subjects of neutral countries.

Congress tried to include such residents in the conscription lists. Many of them were drafted and served without protest, service enabling them to cut short the process of naturalization. Others claimed release from the army and secured it by an appeal to the diplomatic representatives of their countries. Our State Department properly held that the United States had no right to conscript neutral nationals. Congress tried to override that decision. But the State Department's ruling was enforced by the military authorities.

Now Congress wants to deport those who, while maintaining residence here, used their foreign allegiance as a means of escaping service. It has the right to repatriate such aliens if it sees fit to do so. Those who dodged the draft, after taking out first papers, are certainly not promising material for citizenship. They are not worth Americanizing.

Yet, on the other hand, if they are engaged here in productive labor they are an economic asset. There has been a considerable emigration from this country in the last four years. The wealth of a nation lies in its productive capacity. Is it not something like cutting off one's nose to spite one's face to deport ablebodied workers, even though they stood on their technical rights in 1917 and 1918 and declined to serve in our armies?

Sentimentally, expulsion would represent a fair reprisal. But industrially it would be to our disadvantage. Is it worth while to expel aliens who are able to pay their own way merely for the sake of rebuking a "slackerism" on their part which was sanctioned both by custom and the law of nations?

The Barring of Berger

In 1909 Brigham Roberts, an unabashed upholder of polygamy, sought to take the seat in Congress to which he had been duly elected. A motion against permitting this open defier of the act under which Utah became a member of the Union was made, entertained and passed. Later, a committee of the House reported against the admission of Roberts, and he never became a member.

The Roberts procedure is to be invoked against Berger, elected by the Fifth Wisconsin District, but now under sentence for seditious utterances. Under the Constitution the House judges its membership. Its right to exclude is absolute and non-reviewable elsewhere. It may exclude with or without reason. Its discretion is plenary. It can follow old precedents or make new ones.

Yet public opinion, as well as the temper of the House, sustains the doctrine that not for light or frivolous reasons shall the House take away from a Congressional district its privilege of electing any one pleasing to it. "Blot from the spangled banner of the Union the bright star that glitters for the name of Mississippi," exclaimed Sergeant Prentiss, when about to be unseated, "but leave the stripe behind, fit emblem of her degradation." The fervid orator was enforcing the point that a whim of the House might not justly be substituted for the return of a duly held election.

Should Berger be excluded? Is his status such that decency demands he be not accepted as a lawmaker for others? The general judgment is that he may be and should be excluded. This is not only because he is convicted of a specific crime, but because he has coöperated with those who would have government by force rather than by law, who say it is permissible to seize power, and that democracy based on consent and free elections should be overthrown.

It is difficult to see how any one in sympathy with general outlawry and who would destroy all peaceable social bonds should want to be associated with a system repudiated as wicked. Formerly Mr. Berger was an evolutionary Socialist, and as such, served in the House of Representatives, but his pro-Germanism and other influences have seemingly led him into the revolutionary ranks.

Brigham Roberts objected merely to one law. The revolutionary or Bolshevik Socialist objects to all laws enacted under the democratic plan. He would seem unfitted for any part in democratic lawmaking.

Where Work Is

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I am connected with two machine tool builders at Springfield, Vt., and one textile machinery plant. All are very busy. They cannot get sufficient men. Some of them have telephoned down here and I have been to the employment bureau, but they tell me that they cannot get men to go into the country. The superintendent of the apartment house where I live says he cannot get men. The manager of the garage where I keep my car says he cannot get men or keep them.

I hear this everywhere. I understand that men who have been in the great outdoors dislike to go back into shops and factories, but somebody has to. Many of these discharged men have never been in a great city before and are attracted by the bright lights and do not wish to leave. This does not mean but what there is work for everybody if they will go where the work is.

The incident you mention regarding a commissioned officer is typical. I have met similar cases personally. These men have been in command of troops. They have taken part in a great big game, and they have an exalted idea of their worth in business. These men have to come down to earth. It requires business training to successfully hold important business positions.

The outlook for the next year is very promising. Business is improving rapidly in all lines, except steel and its products, which show a small but steady improvement, and which from now on will move rapidly. If the men who want work are willing to go where the work is there should be no difficulty in taking care of them. WALTER WOOLSON BROWN.

New York, May 14, 1919.

A Neglected Business

(From The Thrift Magazine)

In emphasizing the business importance of the home the late Colonel Roosevelt once observed that more than three-fourths of all the money that is spent in this country goes for the upkeep of our homes and is paid over the counters by women. Whether we think this estimate is too large or too small, there can be no doubt that homekeeping is our greatest business.

It is also unfortunately true that, of all forms of business, homekeeping has received least attention at the hands of business systematists. Not one home in a hundred is organized on any kind of a business plan worthy of the name.

Entertaining Our Heroes

(From The Belvidere, Ill., Republican)

Fred Lewis, of the Belvidere Hotel barber shop, sang three times at the soldiers' club at Rockford last evening. Many of the patrons of the club are men from overseas, accustomed to all kinds of hardships.

THE ANNUAL EXODUS OF THE BLACK SHEEP

The Confession of a Profiteer

With the Comment of a Fellow Farmer

To the Editor of The Tribune.

Sir: I am inclosing an article, written by an American farmer, describing his condition of life and finances. This condition is not exceptional, but typical of thousands of farmers throughout this country. Few city people realize these things, or if they do are pleased to ignore them. Can you make use of the inclosed article, to bring before the minds of your readers some of the problems which the farmer finds himself compelled to face, but which he cannot solve without the help of the city man?

The farmer is not a profiteer. Far be it from such; his balance is all too often on the wrong side of the sheet. All he asks is fair treatment, and not misrepresentation.

B. K. FIELD.

Staten Island, May 15, 1919.

(From The Rural New Yorker)

Yes, I am a profiteer. I can no longer conceal my awful guilt. Out of my ill-gotten gains I have actually lived in a more or less riotous fashion the past two years, and have paid my mercenary creditors as much as $200 each year. But before you condemn me too severely, listen to my story. Seven years ago my wife and I came to this farm of sixty cultivated acres, the savings of a lifetime of work in other lines. The soil is of good type and well drained, but with depleted fertility and with old and ill-adapted buildings. The farm had not the "scratch of a pen" against it, but to get an outfit we mortgaged it for $1,500. How pitiful and poor an outfit such a sum will buy only those know who have tried it, but by dint of borrowing and exchanging with neighbors we have got along. We took this step lightheartedly. Surely one prosperous year or, at most, two would clean it up and leave us free to make the improvements we planned.

The Dairy Route

We chose the dairy route. Not that we were keen for the hard work we knew lay before us, but the condition of the farm insisted on it. We were too far from our local market to sell milk, and had no shipping market, so were compelled to make butter. We have stuck to our text through thick and thin. No galley slave, chained to his bench, had a more slavish task or put in longer hours, although they may have been more monotonous. I am only an average farmer. No one will ever hold me up to the gaze of an admiring world as a bright and shining example. I am not a whirlwind for work. Naturally no one is when verging on sixty, but I am a plodder who stays on the job "till the cows come home." Even in midwinter, when the farmer is popularly supposed to be taking his forty winks, and toasting his shins, 4:45 a. m. sees us up and at it, and sometimes 8:30, more often 9 or 9:30 p. m., sees the close. No daylight foolishness for us. We use all there is, and burn the candle at both ends. My wife works even harder than I. With her own hands she goes through the long daily routine of household cares on a farm, and being a direct descendant of the original "Old Dutch Cleanser," no halfway measures prevail. She raises and cares for the chickens and turkeys that add $800 per year to the farm income. She helps with the milking when her own work will allow, and often when it does not, and churns, works and prints forty pounds of butter weekly—no light task in itself. If she has a spare moment she drops down to rest, for her work is a sore test for her strength and years. I would be helpless without her. Can't she get help? Don't ask foolish questions. You know as well as I that there are not servants enough for the overworked town ladies, so why should a plain country women butt in? They outbid her every time with short hours and high wages.

Returns and Expenses

With the help of a boy for eight or ten months of the year our income exceeds $2,000 per year, not counting our own flour, meat, milk, eggs, butter, fruits and vegetables—no small amount. This is nothing to boast of, and yet when under our handicaps you did it out of a none too willing soil you will know that you "have been somewhere and seen something." Where does it all go to? Oh, yes, we know to a cent. It pays the interest, taxes, insurance, labor, fertilizers, repairs, necesesary supplies and the many other expenses of the farm, but very little to the proprietors. Not a cent goes for tobacco or liquors, and no movies, no musical instruments, no flivver with its accompanying gasolene and repairs and no seashore excursions. One $16.50 suit of clothes has done service for good for seven years, and the rest of the time it is blue denims and brogans for mine. Not that I object to the uniform or feel that I disgrace it, but what city man would stay by a business that would not afford him at least one good suit a year? Our only luxury is a daily paper to keep us in touch with the outside world.

Seven Years' Work

At the end of seven years let us face our situation squarely. On the one hand, we have added $150 to our original equipment: we have built two wood hoop silos, the cheapest possible kind, no roof and earth floor, but filled with good silage for winter and summer feeding. Our herd of cattle has grown from one cow and two calves to fifteen in number, headed by a registered Guernsey bull; thanks to the manure our fields begin to talk back when we speak to them, and the farm is slowly rising in value because of improvements, local and otherwise. On the other hand, our buildings, implements and team are seven years older and sadly needing repairs or replacement; our mortgage has grown from $1,500 to $2,000, and we owe an additional $1,000 to banks or otherwise. We have even drawn on our meagre life insurance to see the thing through, something that no one with dependents should think of doing, and, as I said in the beginning, we have never been able to make any headway against our indebtedness until the last two years, and a pity 'tis that it took a world war to make this possible.

Causes and Conditions

How do I account for our condition? Here is the substance: We have sold for what was offered without reference to cost, and we have bought at a price that always included a liberal profit to some one else. It is further aggravated by the fact that because of this I have been unable to buy labor-saving machinery, and have been compelled to work in the old back-breaking, time-killing way. My town friends and armchair critics are quick to call my attention to this point. One says: "Why don't you have a gasolene engine to pump your water, separate your cream and do many other jobs? It would save you many an hour that you might employ to better advantage." Another says: "Any man who spreads fifteen acres a year with stable manure should have a manure spreader. It would save many an hour, and besides do the work better than it can possibly be done by hand." A third man says "Why don't you buy a car? It would save many an hour that you now spend on the road with a slow farm horse." To all these I have the same reply: "No one knows so clearly the value of these things as the man who perforce must do without them. Pay me a decent profit on what I have to sell and all these things shall be added." I have sold my share of 25-cent potatoes, $9 tomatoes and 80-cent wheat. I have paid the home merchant 100 per cent profit on an article in common use in my business, and have seen my produce resold at a two-thirds advance before I left the store. Wouldn't those two rates pay a few of those mysterious overheard charges that we hear so much about, but as farmers are not allowed to employ? I have lost many a dollar through storms, floods, drought, insect pests, blights and diseases, bad roads, gorged markets, etc., and cannot pass this on to the consumer, but must suffer in silence.

Still Hoping

Do I still have hopes? Sure! Hope Farm is my middle name, and while I feel that for my seven years hard service sad-eyed Leah has been wished on me instead of the well-favored Rachel I fondly expected, I am starting another seven years with a full determination to achieve the latter, including the ring-streaked and striped results that are due me, and it will go hard with any man who stands in my way.

No Let-Up

But suppose disease or some great misfortune overtakes you, what then? No doubt I shall die the financial death as many a better man has died before me, the courthouse buzzards will pick my bones and the sad mourner, the armchair critic, will go about the streets, shaking his head and saying: "Too bad! Too bad! Another case of mismanagement!" I may not even have the benefit of clergy. Although I am a member of our home church, an officer in the same and leader of the choir, I have not been inside its doors for over a year. Why? I have no help on Sundays. My help, more fortunate than the master, has its Saturday half holiday and its Sundays free. I find it impossible to do my work and care for my stock, get ready, drive four miles after a slow farm horse, and reach there in time for the morning service, and the evening service has been out of the question for many a year. Does any one, city or country, think it right that it should be necessary to live in this manner that he may keep his head above water?

You have heard the old story of the partnership hunting of the Indian and white man, when the day's bag consisted of a turkey and a turkey-buzzard. White man says: "I'll take the turkey and you the turkey-buzzard, or you take the turkey-buzzard and I'll take the turkey." The Indian replied mournfully: "White man never says turkey to me once." The American farmer is not a hog from Hog Island, but cost and 10 per cent would sound like music to his ears if heard once in a while. MARYLAND.

Pints Rather Than Points

(From The El Paso Times)

While it is generally conceded President Wilson's fourteen points contain much that is good, it is not straining the truth to say there are people in this neck of the woods who would be more interested in a man with fourteen pints.

A Week of Verse

Not I

(From Contemporary Verse)

I AM not healed of grief; not I,
Nor shall be till spring boughs flame
Their poignancies down the young sky,
In dusks all violet.

Not I. Not till the year has found
Some other fashion for the rain
In old thin autumn fields; its sound
Against a lonely pane.

Not till the worn, dear, usual things—
Street, house, or even a chair, a jar—
Rid them of all rememberings,
Grow strange, and cold, and far.

Who plucks my cowslips in the sun?
Whose step fleets by the withered tree?
Whose shadowy, golden laughters run
Betwixt my books and me?

They have been gone a thousand years,
I grant it. Are the deeps fallen dry?
Wears grief a look not that of tears?—
Not I, indeed, not I.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE.

Home

(From Contemporary Verse)

THE smell of hot bread
With a gold-brown crust,
Cooling;
The gentle light of afternoon
Dozing upon the shining windowpanes;
The old rug whose faded threads
Melt into the brown scrubbed floor;
The tick of a clock
Above the sink;
An occasional faint plop of water
Dropping from the faucet.

A leaf floats to the dry grass;
The wind breathes;
The light softens,
Deepens,
Imperceptibly;
Upstairs the indeterminate sounds
Of human movement
Flutter the air;
Mother rising, vaguely as in a dream,
From her nap.
The quiet ripples away
From the staircase,
Eddies into the corners of the kitchen
As she comes down;
Comes down
And parts the silence
As a stone parts the waters.

BERENICE VAN SLYKE.

Three Poems by Jules Romains

(From Art and Letters, London)

I

IT IS night. I hear only my steps on the road;
In my eyes alone lies the plain without houses,
And the darkness dies suddenly when I have passed.

Ah! If to-night I could still believe
That 'tis I, I alone, between sand and stars,
That 'tis I who am vision, time and thought!

Once a wind like this wind of to-night caused me
To shudder, as I felt where my body finished.
I was naked. I hung in the strength of the stars
As hangs the new-born child in its stays.

Now I know well that I am not alone.
And shreds of the gods cling round my limbs,
I no longer wish to tear myself from them.

Oh, companions, true masters, coverings,
Grave-clothes piled on my living head,
What will you do with me if I die now?

II

I WILL not whisper even one name
To-night. I will not tempt the shadows;
Nothing more must be born of my voice.

I will sow nothing more on the ploughed air,
My eyes are open, I wait that they see.

I let my hands lie along my body.
Look! I do not hold them out to you;
Come softly! My hands no longer suffice
To tear you away from the night.

Nothing moves. The darkness is limp,
It hangs, like some dead giant hanging.
You do not come, and I stand waiting.

Should I lift up my arms a little?
Like a child that is learning to walk.
Ah God!
Come stumbling, and fall into my arms.

My arms are open; you do not fall there.
Ah! What horror to rock on the darkness,
To feel no more on the floor of the sea
The sane and steady weight of the anchor.
Ah! What horror to feel at the capstan
All the chains becoming light.

III

I AM free. Unbounded space is my breastplate,
The virgin air I embrace, is mine,
The trees salute me with bending branches,
And the vagabond wind comes to lick my feet.

No longer a being engulfed in his race
I have broken the nails which rivet the mind,
And I show to the rocks, to the leaves, to things outward
Man, silver foam that covers with blossom
The black stream of natural forces.

I regain the pose of natural dignity
Of the man who sums up and consummates his life;
Plants kneeling before me, glorify
My solitary soul expanding its wings.

I brandish my will and my fists without striking
The wall, the thought, or the forbidden flesh,
My sole conscience illuminates space,
And my isolation renders me limitless.

—Translated from the French of Jules Romains by Helen Rootham.

Won By Ear

(From Contemporary Verse)

THEAH'S a man up the street
Ah'm jus' itchin' tuh meet—
He's the man with the slidin' trombone.
Ah don't understan'
How he does it so gran'
But he sho' gits uh wonderful tone.
That Mendels'n Song—
He jus' rags its uh-long
An' zoons it right intuh mah soul.
When he plays "Ovuh Theah"
Ev'ry kink in mah haih
Jus' natchully stahts tuh unroll.
Mistah Man, Mistah Honey,
Take me an' mah money,
Whenevuh yo' want me Ah'm yo'n.
Ah'll cook while yo' eat—
Shine the shoes on yo' feet—
If yo'll play on that slidin' trombone.

DANIEL W. TROY.